

# South Carolina and the Public Agenda

South Carolina Commission on  
Higher Education  
February 4, 2016

# Summary Statistics

- 65% of new jobs will require postsecondary credentials by 2020.
- 40% of U.S. working age adults have at least an Associate Degree.
- 37% of S.C. working age adults have at least an Associate Degree.
- 22% of S.C. working age adults have at least some college but no degree (550,000 + people).

# Evolution of Public Agendas

- “Public Agenda” is a generic term for a plan that addresses how a state’s higher education system can help meet state needs.
- The concept of a public agenda emerged in the 90s in response to the growing demands of the global economy.
- An explicit focus on educational attainment goals as the central component of a public agenda appeared in the early 2000s.

# Characteristics Of A Public Agenda

- A public agenda focuses on state needs, especially on increasing educational attainment, and on aligning institutional capacities, programs, and initiatives to meet those needs.
- A public agenda focuses on the long term and the big picture. It is a set of goals for meeting state needs, a set of strategies for meeting the goals, and a set of metrics for measuring progress.

# Educational Attainment Goals

- The Lumina Foundation (Lumina) has adopted a goal that 60% of working age adults will have a high quality postsecondary credential by 2025.
- Lumina reports that at least 30 states (including SC) have established statewide educational attainment goals.
- The SC goal is that 29% of working age adults will have at least a baccalaureate degree by 2030. Lumina reports that 27% of working age adults currently have at least a baccalaureate degree.
- The SC goal was established by the Higher Education Study Committee in its 2009 report: Leveraging Higher Education For A Stronger South Carolina.

# Public Agenda Development In SC

- In 2002, CHE approved a strategic plan for public higher education that was developed and refined through meetings of the Planning Advisory Council and with input from all areas of higher education. It appears to have had little or no impact on policy choices.
- In 2003 CHE released Foundations For The Future (FFF), a report it commissioned. FFF's major recommendation was to create a public corporation to develop a public agenda and a new financing policy. The public corporation was never created but CHE and institutional staff did some preliminary work on a public agenda which came to a halt after creation of the Governor's Task Force on Higher Education in 2006.

# Public Agenda Development In SC

- The Governor's Task Force on Higher Education recommended creation of a Higher Education Study Committee (HESC) to develop a Statewide Strategic Plan.
- In 2008-09, the HESC issued a two part report entitled Leveraging Higher Education For A Stronger South Carolina.
- The HESC report recommended four goals focused on educational attainment, research and innovation, workforce training and educational services, and resources and effectiveness.
- At least three follow-up reports on the status of HESC recommendations were presented to CHE and political leaders, the last in 2012.

# Public Agenda Development In SC

- Each of the three reports made substantive recommendations and were developed through a collaborative process, and each included elements of a public agenda.
- The HESC report made a strong statement of the need for a public agenda: “higher education is critical to our state’s future success.... A focused action-oriented statewide higher education plan is necessary...to increase...SC’s competitiveness and realize a prosperous economic future and enhanced quality of life....”
- True in 2008. Even more so in 2016.



# Concluding Observations

- CHE should resume its efforts to develop and execute a Public Agenda. Substantial work has already occurred in identifying challenges and establishing goals, but more work needs to be done on developing metrics for measuring progress.
- CHE should build on what has already been done by identifying that which is still relevant, modifying or clarifying goals as necessary, developing a more challenging and broadly based educational attainment goal, and developing a relatively small set of performance indicators to measure progress.
- As hard as it is to develop a public agenda, it is even harder to sustain it over time. Sustainability will depend in large part on the credibility of the development process and its end product, and on the continuing leadership and engagement of CHE members.